



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New study points to college advising practices that improve student graduation

RICHMOND, IND. – The Indiana Commission for Higher Education (CHE) today spotlighted effective college advising practices that will help Hoosier students better navigate their program of study and complete college on time.

“Far too many students in Indiana start college without a real plan for their education or a clear path to graduation, and many end up with wasted credits, debt and no degree as a result,” said Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education Teresa Lubbers. “In partnership with our colleges, we want to address this challenge head on with proactive measures that provide students with clearer choices, better guidance and higher graduation rates.”

With less than a third of Indiana’s four-year college students and only 4 percent of the state’s community college students graduating on time, there is a growing body of evidence that clear degree maps, proactive advising and a more sensible approach to selecting college programs and courses can empower students to make better decisions, save time and money, and increase their likelihood of earning a degree.

The recommendations were included as part of a new study designed to inform state policy and campus practices, titled “*Guided Pathways to Student Success: Perspectives from Indiana College Students & Advisors.*” The study aimed to:

- Understand the barriers student face in completing college
- Solicit feedback on a set of potential policy proposals
- Spotlight effective strategies based on a review of national research and best practices

Through 11 focus groups with current college students, college dropouts, faculty advisors and professional advisors at public two- and four-year colleges across Indiana. The study was also informed by a related project on barriers to seamless college credit transfer, which drew upon information gleaned from more than 50 focus groups on Indiana campuses.

The recommended strategies for preventing wasted credits and improving graduation rates include:

- Supplement college advising with structured degree maps that simplify the course-selection process and provide students with a clear path to graduate on time
- Encourage students to complete 15 credits each semester; or 30 credits per academic year
- Institute proactive advising practices that intervene when students fail to complete key milestone courses, take courses on their degree map, or make satisfactory academic progress

Sept. 19 Summit on Student Success

The proposed reforms to college advising practices will be the focus of a first-of-its-kind convening of college leaders on Sept. 19. Sponsored by CHE, the summit will feature state guidance on a newly legislated degree map requirement, best practices in student advising and the unveiling of Indiana’s new “15 to Finish” campaign, an initiative designed to encourage Hoosier college students to complete at least 15 credit hours each semester. Learn more at www.che.in.gov.